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ABSTRACT

This brief report considers implications for states of the major reports on teacher education. Recommendations are highlighted from the Southern Regional Education Board's report "Improving Teacher Education: An Agenda for Higher Education and the Schools" and compared to recommendations in reports from the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education ("A Call for Change in Teacher Education"), the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy ("A Nation Prepared"), and the Holmes Group ("Tomorrow's Teachers"). Issues discussed include: (1) 4 vs. 5 years for teacher preparation programs; (2) the revitalization of undergraduate education; (3) school involvement; (4) costs; (5) credentials and teacher performance; (6) state and national roles; (7) effect on teacher supply; and (8) several alternatives vs. a single approach. Among the conclusions is the fact that all reports agree that a change in teacher education is needed and that these changes should be monitored and evaluated closely to ensure that the appropriate direction is taken. (CB)

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Regional Spotlight

Southern Regional Education Board

Vol. XV, No. 1

MAJOR REPORTS ON TEACHER EDUCATION: WHAT DO THEY MEAN FOR STATES?

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REGIONAL SPOTLIGHT

SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD

NEWS OF EDUCATION IN SREB STATES

Vol. XV, No. 1 October, 1986

Major Reports on Teacher Education: What Do They Mean for States?

The Southern Regional Educational Board states have charted new directions for teacher education during the last five years. Indeed, statewide admission standards for teacher education programs,* tests before certification, and career ladders for teachers began in the SREB states.

This year two important groups made recommendations about teaching and teacher education: The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, and the Holmes Group. In 1985, the National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education issued its report, commonly referred to as the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) report.

The following comments highlight recommendations in the 1985 SREB report, *Improving Teacher Education: An Agenda for Higher Education and the Schools*, and compare these to recommendations in the AACTE, Carnegie, and Holmes reports. Other issues, such as teacher compensation, working conditions for teachers, the importance of attracting minorities into teaching, and staff development, are important also, but this paper concentrates on the college and university preparation of teachers.

Not surprisingly, there are similarities as well as differences among the various recommendations. Baccalaureate teacher education programs have attracted students who are below average by academic measures—there is widespread agreement about this. Everyone agrees that attracting more bright students into teaching will require higher salaries, improved working conditions in the schools, and financial incentives (such as forgivable loan programs). There is reason to be optimistic about changes in these areas, but the improvement of teacher education cannot wait for the effects of the measures. What can be done now?

Four or Five Years of College to Prepare Teachers?

While there is agreement that the current baccalaureate programs often fail to prepare excellent teachers, there is disagreement on whether the baccalaureate can be improved, or whether the remedy is to add another year of college work beyond the bachelor's program.

The Carnegie and Holmes reports propose five years of college preparation for teachers. A regularly certified teacher would be required to have a master's degree in teaching. The master's degree would follow completion of a bachelor's degree in an arts and science major. This assumes that it is not possible to cover the needed coursework in less than four years of college, and that, therefore, professional studies must take place after the four years are completed. The AACTE report calls for a program of liberal studies, subject area concentration, and professional education, but does not indicate whether this would require four or five years.

The SREB position is that until the undergraduate curriculum is revitalized, and truly represents college-level work beginning with the first freshman course for credit, it is premature to give up on the four-year program as the typical route for preparing teachers.

The current ferment throughout the United States about undergraduate education in general indicates that all is not right, and that standards have declined. The clamor to lengthen the preparation time for teachers has come at the same time as the growing consensus that the quality of many undergraduate programs has suffered. Indeed, the discontent about the quality of beginning teachers is a key part of the general disenchantment over the state of undergraduate education.

SREB suggests that strengthening undergraduate education through higher standards throughout the curriculum will improve teacher education. Of course, these higher standards may result in more students needing more than four years to earn a college degree, but that degree would still be the baccalaureate—one with restored prestige. If efforts by higher education to improve undergraduate education for all students, including beginning teachers, fail, then the costly alternative of completely restructuring teacher preparation might be in order.

States should not commit the extra time and dollars for adding on to teacher education until they are convinced, by experience, that a good four-year program won't work.

*The Carnegie Forum laments the absence of such standards, apparently discounting the fact that there are state mandates which include testing for admission into teacher education programs in some 20 states.

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The SREB position is reinforced by its study of college transcripts. SREB reviewed the courses that 3,000 teacher education graduates completed to gain their baccalaureate degrees. This study revealed a lack of rigor in the curriculum and redundancy in course content, and it clearly showed that opportunities exist to strengthen the four-year program.

Revitalizing Undergraduate Education

Special task forces on higher education, state higher education coordinating agencies, university groups, and legislative committees in many states are currently struggling to define and strengthen undergraduate education. This is a welcome sign that movement is underway which could improve teacher education, as well as the entire undergraduate curriculum.

Each of the groups recommending teacher education changes emphasizes the need to improve subject matter knowledge of future teachers. All agree that teachers cannot teach what they do not know. The disagreement stems from whether the baccalaureate degree can accommodate both subject matter preparation and sufficient instruction on teaching and learning. The Holmes Group and the Carnegie Forum both propose that all teachers complete a baccalaureate degree with a major in the arts and sciences before they take professional education courses at the graduate level.

The SREB transcript study shows that elementary teachers already have time for a rigorous college-level undergraduate program. There is time to include professional education courses, provided there is a housecleaning of some arts and sciences and education courses.

SREB's position is that elementary teachers should take additional courses in the arts and sciences either through a major or upper-level work. Most schools still assign teachers in the early grades to teach the entire curriculum, which centers on language arts and arithmetic. Therefore, it is an open question whether an elementary teacher would be better served by a major in one area than by a sound general education across the major disciplines.

The SREB, AACTE, Carnegie, and Holmes reports all call for the arts and sciences faculties, together with the education faculty, to examine the smorgasbord of courses students can now assemble to add up to a college degree. They also suggest redefining a coherent curriculum—one that is appropriate for future teachers, rather than for future specialists in a discipline. The AACTE and Holmes Group highlight the need for college faculty to serve as models for good teaching practices. If the professors who teach future teachers are dull, how can one expect future teachers to be enthusiastic, interesting, and stimulating? Both the Holmes Group and SREB specifically call on the presidents and other top administrators of universities to lead their campuses in revitalizing undergraduate education. The AACTE report suggests that presidents promote raising the status of teacher education on campus. The intense loyalty of faculty to specialties and research does not naturally lead them toward the general education needs of students. Presidents and deans can bring about changes in general education and in teacher education.

What Can Be Done Now?

There are differences in timing between the SREB proposal and the other reports. Both the Carnegie and Holmes reports suggest that new programs for the master in teaching degree must be developed. The Holmes group suggests that it may take five years to do this. AACTE proposes the development of fifth-year internship programs with schools. SREB calls for immediate action to:

1. Ensure that no degree credit will be given for coursework that is remedial instead of college-level in content.
2. Assess the liberal arts programs, with faculty deciding which of the many courses typically offered should satisfy the general education requirements and truly represent a coherent and rigorous common core curriculum.
3. Assess the education curriculum, with faculty developing a core of essential courses that focus on teaching and learning theory and include research on effective teaching.
4. Determine, through joint action by school and college faculty, how subject area majors for future secondary teachers can better match typical high school teaching assignments. (Broader preparation may be needed, in contrast to narrow majors, if a high school teacher is expected to teach both physics and biology, or both history and U.S. government.)
5. Provide state financial assistance to colleges and universities that undertake large-scale teacher education reforms. Such reforms should involve comprehensive changes in the curriculum, rather than mere additions or substitutions of education courses.

More Involvement of Schools

Greater use of the schools and of outstanding school teachers in preparing new teachers is called for in all of the reports. This agreement stems from the widespread awareness that teachers learn teaching skills by practicing them in classrooms. This led SREB, in 1981, to recommend in *The Need for Quality* that each state promote "beginning teacher programs." Such programs are designed to provide beginning teachers with support and coaching from experienced teachers and college faculty. Teacher education programs cannot fully develop classroom management skills through lectures, reading, and student teaching experiences. It takes time and coaching to develop these skills on the job—no matter what kind of extensive campus-based education program may have been completed. AACTE also calls for school-based internship programs lasting one year at a minimum, with candidates in paid teaching positions.

The Holmes and Carnegie groups also propose that more use be made of the schools in teacher education. Much of the advanced training they propose would occur in selected schools.

Features of Reports on Teacher Education

The Need for Quality, 1981
Meeting the Need for Quality, 1983
Improving Teacher Education: An Agenda for Higher Education and the Schools, 1985

Southern Regional Education Board

- The four-year undergraduate program should continue as the typical entry into teaching. Requirements should be more rigorous and courses more meaningful.
- Beginning teacher programs which are joint efforts of higher education and the schools should continue.
- Evaluating the results of new models to prepare beginning teachers, including state programs for alternative certification of liberal arts graduates and selected fifth-year programs, should be encouraged.

	Educational Requirements	**Type of Certification**
Provisional Teacher	4-year teacher education or liberal arts degree	Provisional
Professional Teacher	Completion of beginning teacher program that includes on-the-job coaching and assessment	Renewable

A Call for Change in Teacher Education, 1985

National Commission for Excellence in Teacher Education
(Also known as the AACTE report)

	Educational Requirements	**Type of Certification**
Provisional Teacher	Degree level is left open; sufficient to integrate liberal studies, subject specialization, and professional studies.	Provisional, non-renewable
Professional Teacher	Completion of one-year paid internship	Renewable tenured certification

Tomorrow's Teachers, 1986

Report of the Holmes Group

	Educational Requirements	**Type of Certification**
Instructor	Bachelor's in arts and sciences plus several months of intensive pedagogical studies. The 4-year undergraduate education major and degree would be abolished; a new 5-year "master's in teaching" program would be created.	5-year non-renewable certificate; would be supervised by professional teacher
Professional Teacher	Master's in teaching (including full year of supervised teaching)	Renewable tenured certificate
Career Professional	Doctorate in education plus extensive and outstanding experience as professional teacher	Renewable tenured certificate

A Nation Prepared, 1986

Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy

Initially states would license entry-level teachers who hold bachelor's degrees in arts and sciences. A professional lead teacher would supervise beginning teachers. The 4-year undergraduate education major and degree would be abolished; a new 5-year "master's in teaching" program would be created.

A National Board for Professional Teaching Standards would be created to develop the standards (educational program standards, certification tests, performance assessment criteria, etc.) for teachers. Initially teachers would seek National Board Certification on a voluntary basis. The Forum's hope is that eventually such certification would become the norm.

The Board would issue two levels of certification beyond initial state licensure.

	Educational Requirements	**Type of Assignments**
Board Certified Teacher	Master's in teaching	Majority of teaching force (10-month contract)
Advanced Certificate	Additional advanced study to meet performance standards of the Board	Lead teachers (12-month contract) or Advanced Certificate holders (10-month contract)

Costs: Beginning Teacher Programs *or* 5-Year Programs

What is the difference then between the SREB "beginning teacher programs" (already in place in many SREB states) and the new proposals? The Carnegie report suggests that beginning teachers would be in a paid teaching position while in the fifth-year master's program. In beginning teacher programs teachers are paid full-time salaries, but they are not also required to be university students generating credit hours and, thus, additional state funding. Beginning teacher programs do require public funding in the form of support for the university and school staff who instruct and evaluate the beginning teachers. The funding of these programs requires attention. Current formulas do not adequately support the services provided by college and school faculty. Beginning teacher programs hold great promise to make a difference in improving teaching, but if inadequately funded, they will not deliver on that promise.

The Carnegie and Holmes five-year certification requirement would be more costly for states because of the school-based internships and appropriations to the public colleges and universities offering these master's programs. Carnegie also proposes financial aid for special categories of students who would be making low salaries as beginning teachers and faced with the costs of taking additional college work.

The potential differences in the costs of the various approaches raise questions about the results of each. Would the results justify the substantial additional tax dollars and costs to students?

Willis Hawley, Dean of the Peabody College for Teachers at Vanderbilt University, estimates *the national cost of adding a fifth year in teacher preparation could be $6 billion annually*. His estimate may be low, since it does not take into account that while teachers obtain their fifth year of education they would be subsidized in their studies and also would be paid a teacher's salary. He asks whether spending $6 billion to increase teacher salaries, or to reduce classroom size, might generate greater improvements in public education.

Credentials and Teacher Performance

The Holmes and Carnegie reports rely on completion of an advanced degree as an initial selection criterion for "lead" or for "professional" teachers. This strengthens the long-standing system whereby teachers' pay is tied to credentials and to longevity. Although the Holmes and Carnegie groups suggest that performance assessments in

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classrooms would be used in part to identify the "lead" or "professional" teachers, they rely heavily on credentials for this selection. The Holmes Group emphasizes the importance of continued degree work to an even greater extent—recommending that teachers would typically complete a doctoral degree to reach the Career Professional level.

If anything exemplifies the current search for a better system of rewarding teachers, it is the idea of rewarding *performance* rather than paying teachers on the basis of degrees held and longevity. Requiring the master's degree for "professional" teachers reinforces the traditional lockstep model states are laboring to escape.

While there is agreement that change is needed in teacher preparation, there is another fundamental difference between the SREB approach and the Carnegie and Holmes directions. Indeed, the Carnegie report is based on a vision of a radically-changed teaching profession, in which teachers have primary responsibilities in the redesign and administration of the schools. This restructuring would provide a professional environment for teachers, who would decide how best to meet state and local goals for educating children and who would take part in a more collegial style of school administration. Both the Holmes and Carnegie reports believe that a higher standard of educational preparation is essential for this new and greater professionalism. While these two reports argue for changes in both the quality and length of teacher education programs, the SREB report focuses on strengthening the quality of existing four-year programs.

SREB holds that radical changes which affect an entire system, and which have great costs, logically should be based on conclusive evidence that such changes will bring about the expected results. It is not known the degree to which the proposed extended teacher education programs will lead to more learning for school children. Learning outcomes should be the primary goal of any changes. Greater professionalism would surely follow.

There are, of course, no data on whether the programs would generate substantially improved learning since the programs envisioned in the proposals are yet to be designed.

Some fifty percent of the teachers in the United States now hold a master's degree, primarily in education. There is no evidence that this mass upgrading of credentials has improved student learning.

The new master's in teaching program as proposed by the Carnegie and Holmes groups may turn out to be quite different from the currently offered master's programs. But then again, it may not. If the faculty who staff the new programs are the same who teach in the graduate programs now, it is difficult to see how the new programs would be radically different from those that teachers have completed in the past.

One more common thread of the four groups' positions should be noted. Everyone is concerned with raising the "professionalism" of the teaching profession. Higher salaries represent only part of the solution. The contradiction between mandating in ever greater detail the school curriculum that teachers will follow and treating teachers as professionals has become very apparent. The quandary lies between ensuring that common curriculum standards will be met in the most remote parts of the states, where there may be few teachers who would fit the Holmes and Carnegie descriptions of a "professional," against the imperative that a real teacher can function best on his or her own, and is demeaned by having to adhere to some manual or "canned" curriculum.

The public schools employ over two million teachers. "Professionalizing" an occupation of this magnitude through the process of upgrading the education requirements is a different problem than achieving similar status for a smaller group. *The medical profession*—which is often used as a comparison group for the new models for the teaching profession—*in total numbers 500,000* as compared to the projected *200,000 new teachers each year.* Moreover, the use of one national and stringent set of standards to certify teachers will be difficult to sustain to the extent that teachers who do not pursue that certificate may still teach in the private schools. The medical profession, which can control its practice everywhere with the power of licensure, has an easier time establishing professionalism via this route than a profession such as teaching that lacks total control over practice.

State and National Roles

The Carnegie Forum recommends a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which would establish program, certification, and performance standards. The two levels of certification would be voluntary. Their hope is that such certification would eventually be sought by all teachers and incorporated into each state's certification process. The possible benefits of a National Board should be weighed against the difficulties in implementing a national approach for what is accepted as ultimately a state responsibility.

The development of teacher testing illustrates the difficulty states have in adopting identical procedures for assessing teachers. During the last decade the majority of states have adopted a teacher test prior to certification. Many states have chosen the National Teacher Examinations. Yet each state has adopted a different qualifying score for various teaching specialties. Other states have developed their own teacher certification tests.

In an effort to facilitate interstate mobility for teachers, and save them from having to retake tests and pay for this privilege, SREB and the Southern Governors' Association have sought the development of crosswalks between the various certification tests. Despite the modest goal, little progress has been made on developing testing reciprocity, even among states with a long history of working together on teacher certification matters—these policies are a far cry from suggesting that every state adopt one test and an equal cut-off score. (Several SREB states have recently formed a consortium to jointly develop certification tests.) It will be difficult to obtain agreement on one national cut-off score for certifying teachers. The Carnegie Forum, of course, does not envision immediate acceptance by states of the national certification test. To begin with, the whole process would be voluntary for teachers.

The Carnegie Forum suggests the national certification process to identify "lead teachers." States that have struggled to develop their own career ladder plans, with tests and performance assessments, may find it disruptive after their strenuous efforts to be confronted by a national process that would superimpose its methods of identifying the outstanding teachers. The Carnegie Forum acknowledges the difficulty of centralized implementation of its plan when it suggests the final step of certifying teachers through assessing their teaching skills must be on a regional or state level. There is no way one national board could undertake such a mammoth program of assessment.

Effect on Teacher Supply

The Carnegie Forum points to the impending teacher shortage. It suggests that the number of graduates will not suffice to meet the demand, with the number of new teachers to be hired annually increasing from 115,000 in 1981 to 215,000 in 1992. Although manpower forecasts of shortages or surpluses sow their own seeds of adjustments as students react to them, there is likely to be a shortage of teachers in the coming years. Such a time does not provide the most opportune moment for a switch to lengthen the required education to enter teaching.

During the 1970s, when so many college graduates were seeking to enter the labor market, the higher education requirements actually served to slow down the flow of entrants into all kinds of occupations. The demographics of the 1990s will be the opposite. As the older and retired population increases, more young people will be needed to fill openings in many occupations. This situation is likely to put a premium on educational institutions to examine their efficiency in producing graduates in many fields, and to compress offerings rather than to lengthen them. This pressure comes at a time when undergraduate education is under the collective spotlight of educators and elected officials. The two events may not be unrelated.

Several Alternatives vs. Single Approach

Until there is more certainty about the cost and benefits flowing from the more radical changes, SREB has suggested a pluralistic approach to teacher education, involving experimentation with a variety of alternatives. What is needed is not a wholesale swing in one direction. Rather, several approaches should be tried. Evaluation of the various recommended strategies should be built into these trials. Some institutions would try master of arts in teaching programs (as, indeed, a number of institutions are doing). At the same time SREB has urged states to monitor the results of the "alternative certification programs," in which arts and sciences baccalaureates are employed as beginning teachers following a short period of concentrated pedagogical instruction. Both professional educators and the public would be in a better position to select the best approach with the benefit of closely monitored pilot trials of new modes of teacher education. Pluralism is the traditional approach in moving toward educational improvements in this nation. The pluralism stems partly from the decentralization of decision-making and power among the 50 states and the thousands of school districts and colleges and universities. The lack of speed with which 50 states and their constituent institutions implement change may disconcert reformers with global prescriptions.

Conclusions

Change in teacher education is needed. There is little argument about this. SREB suggests change begin with a revitalized undergraduate program—a baccalaureate program that will give future teachers a good general education with specific instruction in teaching and learning, followed by a beginning teacher program, is the best first option for states. At the same time, five-year and alternative certification programs should be tested and closely monitored and evaluated. Otherwise, at the end of the experiments no one will know whether different ways of preparing teachers make a difference in student learning. Too much is at stake to do otherwise. Adopting any single new direction en masse, without evidence that more costly alternatives would produce better results, would not be wise.

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NEWS OF EDUCATION IN SREB STATES

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